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12

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/074,028	02/14/2002	Bernadette Mary Gibbs	53394.00566	5655

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EXAMINER

KIDWELL, MICHELE M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3761

DATE MAILED: 02/08/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/074,028

Applicant(s)

GIBBS, BERNADETTE MARY

Examiner

Michele Kidwell

Art Unit

3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 November 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 3,4,17-25 and 34-37 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-2,5-16 and 26-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 05/14/02
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of Species 11 in the reply filed on November 19, 2004 is acknowledged.

The applicant indicates that claims 1 – 2, 5 – 16, 26 – 33 and 37 read on the elected species. The examiner does not consider claim 37 as readable on the claimed species.

Claims 3 – 4, 17 – 25 and 34 – 37 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 – 2, 5 – 10, 13, 26, 28 and 32 – 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Suekane (US 5,628,738).

With reference to claim 1, Suekane discloses an absorbent article comprising a main body having a first main body waist portion, a second main body waist portion and a central main body portion disposed between the first and second main body waist portions, the main body having orthogonal longitudinal and lateral axes; and a

Art Unit: 3761

pair of elastic side panels each connecting the first main body waist portion to the second main body waist portion, the main body and the side panels collectively defining a waist opening edge surrounding a waist opening and two leg opening edges, each leg opening edge surrounding a leg opening, each elastic side panel having a first side portion extending laterally outward from the first main body waist portion and terminating in a first outer lateral side panel edge, and a second side portion extending laterally outward from the second main body waist portion and terminating in a second outer lateral side panel edge, the first side portion being attached to the second side portion by a side seam, at least a portion of the side seam being curved when the first and second side portions are in a stretched condition as set forth in figures 1 – 2.

The examiner contends that the claimed limitation requiring that at least a portion of the side seam is curved when the first and second side portions are in a stretched condition is a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention. This recitation must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 370 F.2d 576, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 312 F.2d 937, 939, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). The article of Suekane is fully capable of performing the recited function.

Art Unit: 3761

As to claim 2, Suekane discloses an absorbent article wherein the absorbent article comprises a backsheet (3) and wherein the main body includes a first portion of the backsheet, a topsheet (2) attached to the first portion of the backsheet and an absorbent core (4) disposed intermediate the topsheet and the first portion of the backsheet, the elastic side panels being formed at least in part from a second portion of the backsheet as set forth in col. 3, lines 6 – 16 and figures 1 – 2.

As to claims 5 – 10, 13 and 26, Suekane discloses an absorbent article meeting the claimed limitations as set forth in figure 2.

With reference to claim 28, see the rejection of claim 1.

With respect to claims 32 and 33, the examiner contends that the claimed limitations are a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention. This recitation must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 370 F.2d 576, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 312 F.2d 937, 939, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). The article of Suekane is fully capable of performing the recited functions.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

Art Unit: 3761

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 11 – 12, 14 – 16, 27, 29 – 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suekane (US 5,628,738).

The difference between Suekane and claim 11 is the provision that the first seam angle is in a range from about 10 to about 50 degrees.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the first seam angle in order to compose the most effective product since it has been held that where the general conditions in a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable range involves only a level of ordinary skill in the art.

With respect to claims 12, 14 – 16, 29 – 31, see the rejection of claim 11.

With reference to claim 27, absent a critical teaching and/or unexpected result, the examiner contends that the claimed limitation is an obvious matter of design choice that does not patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michele Kidwell whose telephone number is 571-272-4935. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 5:30am - 2:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Larry Schwartz can be reached on 571-272-4390. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 3761

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Michele Kidwell
Examiner
Art Unit 3761